

Due May 1, 2008

**Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319**

***Request for Iowa Four-Year College/University
Performance Assessment System Funds***

College/University name: _____ University of Northern Iowa

Program Contact Person:

Name Barry Wilson/Merrie Schroeder

Title Director of Assessment/Director of Teacher Education

Address 611 Schindler Education Center _____

University of Northern Iowa _____

Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0607 _____

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Business Office Contact Person:

Name: Edward M. Ebert _____

Title: Grants & Contracts Administrator _____

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Telephone: 319-273-3025 Fax: _____

E-mail: edward.ebert@uni.edu _____

Statement of Assurances

Should a Performance Assessment System Award be made to the applicant in support of the activities proposed in this application, the authorized signature on the cover page of this application certifies to the Iowa Department of Education that the authorized official will:

1. Upon request, provide the Iowa Department of Education with access to records and other sources of information that may be necessary to determine compliance with appropriate federal and state laws and regulations;
2. Use grant funds to supplement and not supplant funds from nonfederal sources.

Certification by Authorized or Institutional Official:

The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in this application is correct, that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the governing body of this organization, or institution, and that the applicant will comply with the attached statement of assurances.

Edward M. Ebert

Grants & Contracts

Administrator

Typed or Printed Name of Authorized Official

Title

Signature of Authorized Official

Date

Please submit both electronically and hard copy to Barry Wilson, TQE Assessment Team Leader, Dept. of Ed. Psych. & Foundations, UNI, Cedar Falls, IA by May 1, 2008.

Process for Procuring Grant Funds:

1. Submit Grant Request Package; Postmarked by May 1, 2008

Grant Request Package Contents:

- Request for Performance Assessment System Funds Cover Page
- Action Plan
- Budget

2. Grant requests will be reviewed by the Assessment Committee, the Leadership Team, and the Iowa Department of Education.
3. Institution will be notified of a grant award by May 21, 2008
4. Contracts for awardees will be developed by the Iowa Department of Education upon notification to the IHE of the award.
5. It will take 30 days after the award notification for a contract to be executed and fully approved. This would be as per a June 1 notification.
6. Payments cannot be released until a contract is fully approved with all signatures.
7. Institutions should not incur costs before a contract is approved and plan accordingly.
8. To acquire each payment, an IHE must submit an invoice or letter with an original signature requesting funds. This is necessary for the release of each payment – fifty percent, forty percent, and final ten percent.
9. An Interim report must be submitted with an invoice by January 15, 2009. NOTE: an awardee will not receive the forty percent payment unless the Interim Report budget indicates that the first fifty percent has been spent.
10. A Final report must be submitted with an invoice by December 15, 2009
11. A report form or template is attached with this RFP. Please use it for the Interim and Final Reports. The form includes a narrative and budget.

The grant application and interim and final reports must be submitted electronically in addition to hard copy.

Assessment to Action: Building Learning Communities

I. Context

Program size: In the past three years, the University of Northern Iowa has graduated between five and six hundred teaching candidates each year who are enrolled in more than 70 endorsement areas. We have 147 full-time and 39 part-time teacher education faculty. The size of the program, number of faculty involved, and the number of program areas are a challenge for developing good communication and collaboration for program improvement.

Assessment System Status: Our UNITED performance assessment system has been under development since 2002. At present, the UNITED system provides very good and timely formative feedback to teaching candidates and advisors and allows quick aggregation of targeted data into an Excel format for further analysis and report. The data system contains most of our candidate performance data over time including GPA, Praxis scores, ratings of clinical experiences including student teaching, and the Teacher Work Sample. We have set up templates for these measures so that we track these indicators over time. In the past two years, the system has been modified to provide careful monitoring of and support for students who have received a notification of concern from faculty and staff. This has been developed to address our concerns about student disposition. We are now much more responsive in addressing problems early and providing interventions that remediate any problems or lead to change of career paths for the student.

Our biggest challenges have involved helping faculty learn how to use the data we collect to inform and guide our program improvement. Previous TQE grants have been devoted to providing professional development opportunities for faculty that supports the goal of program improvement.

Results of Previous TQE Awards. During the 2006-07 academic year, and with the assistance of our first Teacher Quality Enhancement grant, we engaged in a curriculum mapping project with a select group of our teacher education faculty. Faculty were identified who represented a cross-section of professional core courses, methods courses, and clinical experiences including student teaching. We held two workshops in the summer of 2006 followed by monthly meetings in the fall with the same faculty. The first workshop introduced faculty to the curriculum mapping process and was facilitated by Dr. Mary Herring. The second workshop assisted faculty in mapping their course. As a result of that workshop, we were able to develop a partial curriculum map of our teacher education program. The curriculum map is dynamic and illustrates by course and selected program, course activities and assessments that apply to specific INTASC skills, knowledge and dispositions. Meetings in the fall centered on the identification of areas where specific INTASC standards were not well represented in the map. Particular focus was devoted to the areas of assessment and diversity.

The second TQE Award for 2007-08 accomplished three objectives:

- 1) We expanded the curriculum map and associated instructional activities and assessments. This expansion occurred both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal expansion meant that in courses that are multi-section (as many as 11 or 12 sections), we engaged all faculty who taught the course to carefully examine and affirm the current map and develop consensus on appropriate measures of student outcomes. Vertical expansion meant that we engaged additional methods faculty who had not been represented in the earlier workshops.
- 2) We conducted faculty workshops on outcomes assessment and grading. For this segment, we developed and pilot tested an on-line course developed around Barbara Walvoord's *Essential Grading* text. The course was facilitated by our WebCT courseware. Incentives were given to an initial cohort of 32 faculty for their participation. Outcomes are being assessed via pre and post

comparisons of their assessment practices. The on-line component was supplemented by face to face meetings.

- 3) We modified the UNITED performance system to provide feedback to community college partners who request data regarding the success of their graduates in our teaching program. We are working with community college faculty to determine how best to provide data summaries for AA graduates.

The number of faculty who asked to participate in the mapping and assessment workshop exceeded our estimates. We were able to accommodate all faculty with an additional support grant from our College of Education in the amount of \$4000.

In addition to these TQE grant supported activities, we also held a Professional Development Day on February 29, 2008 to engage faculty in the study of data collected over several years and to develop tentative action plans for program improvement. Final versions of action plans are being submitted to the director of teacher education this month. The professional development day was funded entirely by university funds. A brief summary of our assessment activities to date can be reviewed at <http://www.uni.edu/coe/epf/Assessment/>.

II. Project Narrative

We have two goals for this project:

- develop a learning culture and community through planful and coordinated change
- improve the quality of key assessments

Building Learning Communities. The next phase of our assessment system refinement will further the development of a learning culture among our faculty. As Huba and Freed (2000) point out, assessment for improvement is the beginning of conversations among faculty. Furthermore, they assert that assessment is the beginning of conversations about learning that lead to deeper, collective understandings about what students are learning in the program. Through our assessment results and work supported by the TQE grant, we have learned where our curriculum has been more or less successful in producing teachers who meet the INTASC standards. We have better articulated our program through the curriculum mapping project and improved course-level assessment in our previous work. We have also had some discussions among faculty at our Professional Development Day to determine where to focus our energies for improvement. Our next step is to organize and facilitate the collaborative work across segments of the program that will maximize the opportunity for positive change. We also want to be sure that there is a focus on improving those segments of the program that our data suggests as most in need of improvement.

We will identify four interdisciplinary teams of faculty who share common responsibilities and interests in the improvement of performance in specific INTASC standard areas. Each improvement team would be charged with a specific focus for change as well as the coordination of an improvement plan that incorporates and links action plans submitted by program areas and departments. Each team will also be charged with developing practices and schedules that can be sustained when grant support is no longer available. In other words, they will be developing a model for sustainable change for the future.

The composition of each team will include two members from our professional education faculty, one clinical faculty member, and three methods faculty. We have chosen this composition to assure that there is coordination in change efforts between clinical experiences, professional education coursework, and methods courses. The specific assignments and targets are identified in the following table:

Areas Targeted for Improvement with 6 Person Action Teams			
Assessment	Classroom Management	Diversity	Technology
2-professional ed	2-professional ed	2 professional ed	2 professional ed
1 clinical experience	1 clinical experience	1 clinical experience	1 clinical experience
3 methods	3 methods	3 methods	3 methods

Each area will elect a team leader who will have additional responsibilities in the development and coordination of our improvement efforts. We will conduct workshops during the summer months or during the holiday break in December/January to provide direction and support for each team as they learn from our data and from their exchange of materials and ideas. Teams would be tasked with working with the Director of Assessment and the Council on Teacher Education during the school year 2008-09 and 2009-10. Teams will be charged with documenting their activities, decisions, and recommendations for change. We will schedule a progress report to the Council on Teacher Education during the spring of 2009 and a follow-up report for fall 2009.

Improving the Quality of Assessments. The Teacher Work Sample (TWS) is a key end-of-program assessment in our program. The work sample has been required for all of our student teachers for the past several years. The work sample consists of a 25+ page narrative in which the student teacher describes a unit taught over several weeks during the first student teaching placement. The TWS is scored analytically by teacher education faculty and area teachers. Scoring results in 40 data points which are part of our database and which give us quantitative estimates of how well in the process of teaching a unit our students are performing. In addition, the narrative provides very moving qualitative data that our faculty find very motivating in thinking about positive change for the future. Given the importance of this data, we want to provide professional development for faculty and teachers that will improve the reliability of our scoring process. In our most recent research on scorer reliability, our overall agreement among scorers was 80%. We would like to improve and refine the scoring process to give better consistency among our scorers. We plan to conduct scorer training sessions during the 08-09 academic year conducted by Dr. Vickie Robinson. Dr. Robinson has both national and international experience in conducting such workshops for faculty and has been a key faculty member in the development and implementation of the TWS at UNI. Part of the Dr. Robinson's work will include the development of materials to facilitate training in the future that might be delivered in an on-line format and enhance the sustainability of more systematic training of TWS scorers. Dr. Robinson will be assisted in this effort by Dr. Barry Wilson, Director of Assessment, who is responsible for TWS scoring.

References

Huba, M.E., & Freed, J.E. (2000) *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses*. Allyn and Bacon:Needham Heights

III. Action Plan –

Goal	Objectives	Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Budget Request
		1.			
Develop a learning culture and community through planful and coordinated change	Form cross-discipline action teams that will collaborate and coordinate planned changes that target identified needs	1. Identify team leaders and members 2. Review data and area action plans from Feb. 29 3. Link key players and action steps for coordinated change	Merrie Schroeder Barry Wilson Team Leaders Team Members	1. Summer/08 2. Fall 08 /Spring 09 3. Fall 09	
Improve the quality of key assessments	Scorer training sessions to improve scorer reliability of TWS	2. Conduct training sessions for faculty and area teachers 3. Develop on-line module for scorer training that would include a proficiency test	Vickie Robinson Barry Wilson	1. Fall 08 /Spring 09 2. Summer/Fall 09	\$5390

IV. Sustainability Plan. Chapter 79 requires the development of an assessment system to document candidate competence and provide data that is used for program improvement. Other requirements include providing feedback on performance to candidates as they progress through the program. We have confidence in the assessments we have developed and have incorporated a plan to assure that we can maintain good scorer reliability for the TWS, one of our key assessments. Developing a training module will be helpful in assuring that we can maintain the quality of the TWS for making informed judgments about candidates and program.

The development of learning communities that are focused on the improvement of student outcomes is a goal for our action teams. We have not had a structure in place that organizes our faculty across disciplines for focused change. We believe that the models for change developed as a result of grant-funded activity will provide a blueprint that will be used in the future to move us toward the goal of becoming a learning community.

We have also demonstrated an institutional commitment to meeting the requirements of Chapter 79. UNI has provided an appointment of an assessment director for the teacher education program. We have also hired technical support to develop, maintain, and improve our UNITED data system. Finally, our recent professional development day on February 29th was entirely supported by the university. Support was not only monetary, as approximately 125 of 147 teacher education faculty attended as did 20 administrators from all across campus. We are also looking forward to learning more about sustainability in the coming TQE supported meetings in June. The track-record of institutional commitment to teacher education does give us confidence that we will meet or exceed all requirements of Chapter 79.

V. Budget Requests

Personnel	
Wages	\$14,274
Fringe Benefits	\$3,259
Expenses (Travel, Meals, Lodging)	\$550
Professional Services/Professional Development	
Fees	
Expenses (Mileage, Meals, Lodging, Room Rental)	
Software	
Hardware	
Supplies and Materials	\$435
Phone/Mail	
Indirect Costs@ 8%:	\$1,481
Other – specify:	
Total	\$20,000

VI. Budget Narrative:

We have devoted all the resources to professional development for our faculty to close the loop on assessment and incorporate coordinated and collaborative work among our faculty that is directed at program improvement. Our previous TQE projects have been very beneficial in helping faculty become more aware of how their individual course activities and outcomes relate to other courses and activities conducted by colleagues. The small incentives provided by the grant in a time of relative scarcity have given us a strong foundation for the currently proposed project.

Most of the budget is to support the work of action teams to focus on specific areas we have identified as in need of improvement. Almost all the funds are devoted to incentives for faculty meetings and workshops during non-scheduled work times. There is a stipend for Dr. Robinson for her work for the improvement of data quality in the TWS. Team leaders will also have a small stipend to acknowledge additional responsibilities. Dr. Wilson's participation and involvement is part of his normal work requirements. Supplies and materials are for printing or printed materials. There is also a small allocation of funds to support refreshments for workshops.